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obliterate the name "Lauderdale" from a fly leaf of one of the volumes; and the writer further states that he compared the translations with the corresponding *Æneids* of Lauderdale's Virgil, published in 1709, and expresses an opinion that these manuscripts are the originals from which that publication, *pro tanto*, originated. In this criticism I agree with Mr. Lentaigne; but I disagree with that gentleman in his adoption of an early charge of plagiarism from these manuscripts made against Dryden, and consider that Dryden's statement, introduced in the preface to the first edition of his incomparable work, published in 1697, namely, "that he was permitted by Lord Lauderdale to make use of his Lordship's translation, and that he consulted it as often as he doubted of Virgil's sense," may be received as unquestionable truth; indeed, the style of these contemporaneous authors is so different, that neither could with any chance of success adopt the metrical translation of the other as his own. Lauderdale is a close translator, and in that all his merit lies; Dryden is emphatically a poet—graceful, smooth, and aspiring—qualities rarely present in the composition contained in the manuscript volumes now presented to the Academy. These volumes are fragments of an entire work, compiled on the Continent of Europe, and the circumstance is quite appropriate to the history of Richard Earl of Lauderdale, who was a Jacobite, accompanied King James in his expatriation, was at his court at St. Germain's in the year 1692, and died at Paris in 1695. There can be no reasonable doubt that the manuscript volumes are a portion of his Lordship's work, or that that work was completed before Dryden's more classical production was even thought of.

Mr. P. W. Joyce read a paper "On the Changes and Corruptions in Irish Topographical Names."

Mr. W. G. BROOKE, by permission of the Academy, read the following paper:—

#### NOTES ON AN OLD IRISH CANOE FOUND IN LOUGH OWEL, CO. WESTMEATH.

IN the close of last year an old Irish Boat was safely lodged within the walls of this house. Beyond question the most fitting depository for the largest and noblest of these relics of bygone years ever found in this country is the Royal Irish Academy. Actuated by this view, Mr. Charles Levinge, of Mullingar, the fortunate finder of the Boat, presented it to this institution, and it now lies in the rooms beneath us. It is this old Boat which I desire this evening to introduce to your notice, and briefly to describe. My claim to stand here rests, I regret to say, not on my privilege as an Academician, but merely on the fact that, having visited this Boat shortly after it had been raised from its watery bed, I assisted Mr. L. in having it safely transported to Dublin, and brought it under the notice of Sir William Wilde, one to whose valuable labours, and helpful and ready sympathy on the subject of Antiquities, we are all deeply indebted.

The Boat with which I have to do was found in Lough Owel, in the county of Westmeath. In its immediate neighbourhood is a crannogue not yet explored, and hard by two other smaller canoes not yet raised, and which, if the season be favourable, will be taken up in the course of the summer. After the drought of last year the depth of the lake diminished by several feet; and Mr. Levinge, while seated in his row boat, on looking through the water, was attracted by a long piece of black wood, which, while its main portion reposed on the peat, reared a curved beak somewhat proudly from its bed. Further attention confirmed his first impression, that it was an old Boat of enormous length, its bottom covered with a deposit of lake mud several inches in thickness, and lying at that time in water somewhat less than a fathom deep. It required some skill to float so large and so valuable a prize—its sides worn to a knife edge, and ground down by the washing of the tides; its frame pierced through and through with many rows of holes; its stern board knocked out, and its oaken sides weighed down with the saturation of the water of centuries—altogether a boat requiring care, and sympathy, and tender handling.

I shall now briefly describe the canoe, giving its dimensions. As I have already said, it is a single-piece canoe, carved, and hollowed, and fashioned out of a noble oak of the primæval forest. It is forty-two feet long, and three feet five in breadth. Hitherto the boats which have been found in Ireland have not exceeded twenty-eight feet in length; and Sir Charles Lyell mentions a famous Swiss canoe of fifty feet long, and three and a half wide, as the largest which has ever been picked up on the Continent. Had we this Irish canoe as she was originally designed and launched—unworn by the erosion of the water, and unsmitten by the wasting hand of time—it would probably measure some forty-four feet in length, and represent a width of four and a half feet. But, be that as it may, this magnificent Boat may now be pointed out as the Irish analogue of her great Swiss sister, mentioned by Sir C. Lyell. The sides are imperfect; but one has suffered by the wearing action of the water more than the other. That its almost entire disappearance is due to this cause is shown by the thinning down of the total thickness of the bottom of the Boat to a sharp edge along the present ruined gunwales. The comparative preservation of one side is easily accounted for by the fact that it was protected on its exterior face by two rough hewn oak planks, which lay close up against it. The construction of the bow and stern differs most materially, but is similar in principle to a large boat already in possession of your Academy.

If strength were aimed at, it might have been expected that the principle of the curved bow of the boat would have been carried out in its after end. This, however, is not so; for, while the entry is spoon-shaped, the stern, such as it is, represents a section of a boat cut in two amidships. But we are not left in the dark as to the peculiarity of the stern; for a hollow groove at the very end passes from one side to the other, into which the stern board fitted. This, unless they had some

peculiar method of securing and caulking, must have been the weakest part of the Boat. The groove is remarkably well preserved, but of shallow depth. The width, two and a half inches, gives us the thickness of the stern board. In place of being flat-bottomed and straight-sided, as are the large boats hitherto found, the section of the canoe exhibits as delicate and fine a curved form as any frigate of Sir William Symonds, or blockade runner of Mr. John Laird's. Preserved from erosion by the lake mud deposit, the bottom has a solid thickness of five and a half inches, and probably it never was thicker than half a foot; but this is enormous, greatly adds to its weight, and enlarges our view as to its pristine proportions and strength. The lines are fine, and of arrowy straightness, without a trace of sinuosity or distortion, and the timber for the most part is in robust and admirable condition. In forming an estimate of the size of the tree out of which this canoe was fashioned, I may here allude to the fact, that it exhibits no sign of sap wood; and I am informed by those who have examined into this point, that its diameter, as it stood erect in the forest, must have been eight or nine feet. The mode employed in felling it was probably by fire, assisted by such chopping tools as the country people could command.

Notwithstanding the wonder of its size, I now come to the most interesting topic in connexion with my subject; and here I am happy to have the assistance of a drawing behind me, to which I beg your attention, and which represents the inner face of the Boat. I refer to the number of holes which are drilled through the sides or bottom of the canoe, carefully drilled, and in a most workmanlike manner, suggesting sharp tools, and skill in the handling of them. The total number of holes, or parts of holes, which we find is forty-eight. The feature of holes in these old boats is not unusual, but this extraordinary number is most unusual. On looking over the boats down stairs this morning, I found in one boat six small holes, three on each side, and in one of them a plug, which appears to have been broken off violently. In another boat three holes, also very small, not large enough to thrust in a towel pin of modern make, and arranged along the centre of the bottom of the boat. But here we have forty-eight holes, twenty-four along the bottom, and twenty-four lateral ones, of seven of which latter the waste of the sides has left but imperfect sections.

The first thought which is suggested by these holes is the apparent regularity with which they are arranged, and the careful marks of design which their relative positions emphatically proclaim. An inspection of the drawing will show that along the bottom, at stated and constant intervals, we have twenty-four holes in two longitudinal and parallel lines, or twelve in each long row. Viewed transversely, or across the boat, we have twelve pairs of holes, each pair lying in the same right line, and suggesting close connexion in their aim and object. They are pierced right through the unvarying thickness of the bottom, which I have already stated to be five and a half inches. In some of them were found plugs of pine inserted from the interior,

as is evident from the lower ends of them being chipped with a fine tool. These plugs were in a very soft and ruinous condition with water saturation.

I now come to the lateral holes, of which there were twelve on each side. A glance at the drawing will show the same evident care observed in their arrangement, and such a connexion between them and the ones of which I have already spoken, that any theory attempting to account for them independently would seem to be untenable. For, consider the position of these lateral holes—first of those on the side of the boat which is most worn away. They lie somewhat roughly, but for the most part accurately enough, in a line with their respective neighbour holes in the bottom of the boat. This seems at once to establish a connexion between them. There remain the lateral holes on the other, or well preserved side; and here we meet an element of irregularity—distinguished, however, by a rude method of its own, which we must not overlook. Commencing, then, at the bow—the first hole on this side is slightly in advance towards the bow of an imaginary line drawn across the centre of the three holes opposite to it. Walking aft, the next hole is somewhat on the other, or stern, side of such a line. As we proceed further on, we find these lateral holes widening out in each case from such imaginary lines, but seemingly obeying the law of a rude gradation, until the last hole on this side is found outside the groove, and consequently behind the stern board. I have dwelt with some particularity on these holes; for they seem to involve a curious puzzle, which has not yet been cleared up. I have only further on this point to draw your attention to the propinquity of two of the bottom holes to the tail board, and to state that the lateral holes probably lay below the line of flotation, and that they are drilled downwards from the interior at a considerable angle. If the holes are to be regarded as of equal antiquity with the shell, there is no theory so far as I know which accounts for them satisfactorily, and but one which rests on a sufficient amount of probability. If any gentleman present can explain them, I can assure him that I know numbers of people whose curiosity has been excited, and who will be glad to learn his views. It appears, however, to me, that this magnificent piece of wood, once a boat, was afterwards employed for other purposes, to fulfil which it became necessary to perforate her in the manner in which we now possess her. Some light may be thrown upon the subject when the other two canoes shall have been raised. In the absence of Captain Burton, Mr. Clibborn has asked me to mention the view which he threw out on looking at this boat last week. It is, as I understand, common among certain tribes in Africa to construct their boats of three pieces; one is for the bottom, the other two for the sides. Now, the sides overlap the central piece, and are bolted to it with wooden rivets. It occurred, therefore, to Captain Burton that this canoe is but the central fragment of the old boat, and that the lateral holes received the bolts whereby

the sides were fastened on. The period of the construction of this canoe I am inclined to fix in the age of Bronze. In Denmark, the Bronze age is always associated with the oak; and the lake dwellings in the central and western portions of Switzerland belong exclusively to that period. Though much fine work has appeared from flint implements, and though lake dwellings of the Stone period are frequent in eastern Switzerland, yet the size and finish of this relic point to a period of sharp cutting tools. The old bronze, rivalling in temper and strength our modern steel, would naturally furnish weapons of the requisite toughness to fashion the arrowy and curved sides of this admirable specimen of early naval architecture. But, if the boat is later in date than the Stone, it would seem to be earlier than the Iron age. In this age saws appear for the first time. Careful search has never brought to light a bronze saw. Now, if you have a saw, you do not hollow a boat forty-two feet long out of a single tree; it saves time and labour to build it of planks. Robinson Crusoe, who had only an axe, did not dream of doing so; with infinite trouble he chopped the stems of trees into planks to construct his boat. Thus, I should be inclined to say that this boat belongs to the close of the Bronze period, when bronze tools had arrived at some perfection; or to the early dawn of the Iron age, before saws were known or in general use.

A very few words as to the method used to raise the boat from the bed of the lake, and to bring it to shore. The credit of this difficult work is due to Mr. Adams Reilly—a gentleman who I am happy to say is present this evening; and if I fall into error, he can correct me. When found *in situ*, the canoe was resting on the peat. Fortunately, owing to the droughts of last summer, the lake had shoaled to five feet of water. The first step taken was to lighten it of the deposit of lake mud. In this mud were found some bones (not human); and an old copper ring, which may have come off some angler's rod. Piles were then driven down into the lake on either side of the bow of the boat; across their heads was placed a timber platform, which bore a windlass fitted with a stout chain. This chain was first passed under the bows, and hove on; and immediately, the hinder part still remaining firm, the bows were brought to the level of the water. The chain was then passed astern, and fastened to two of the holes amidships. In front of the bows was placed a light wooden raft, or cradle, constructed for the purpose of keeping the boat's head up. It was now drawn forward by the windlass, so that the head lay supported on the raft; and the stern, which was immediately afterwards raised, was brought beneath the platform. With her after portion buoyed up by two boats, she was taken in tow by a third boat, manned by Westmeath boys, and conveyed a mile and a half down the lake, when for the first time—for how many years shall I say?—she touched the shore. With the aid of horses, wheels, rollers, and the usual assembly of rustics who attend on such ceremonies, it was conveyed up to Levington Park in the beginning of last September. An object of considerable interest and attraction to

numbers, it remained there till the end of the year, when Mr. L. presented it as a new year's gift to the Royal Irish Academy.

The following donations were received :—

An antique silver finger ring ; presented by C. Davis, M. D.

Two Irish MSS., containing a Life of St. Patrick, and a Collection of Irish Poems ; presented by John A. Nicholson, M. R. I. A.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1865.

The VERY REV. CHARLES GRAVES, D. D., President, in the Chair.

No papers were read.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1865.—STATED MEETING.

The VERY REV. CHARLES GRAVES, D. D., President, in the Chair.

The SECRETARY of the Council read the following—

#### REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

SINCE the date of our last Report one paper has been printed in the "Transactions," and issued to the Members of the Academy—namely, that by the Rev. Dr. Reeves "On the Culdees." Three are in the hands of the printers, viz.—Captain Meadows Taylor's "On the Cromlechs and other Antiquarian Remains in the Dekhan;" Rev. Professor Haughton's, "On the Semidiurnal Tides at Cahirciveen;" the President's, "On an Undescribed Class of Monuments;" and Mr. W. H. Hardinge's "Concluding Memoir on MS. Mapped and other Townland Surveys in Ireland."

It was stated in the Report of last year that the printing of Captain Meadows Taylor's paper had been completed, and that its issue was prevented only by a delay in the execution of the Illustrations. The Council regret that this obstacle still prevents its publication. The same difficulty has also retarded the issue of the "Proceedings" of the Academy. Since 16th March, 1864, one part has appeared, completing Vol. viii., and containing an Index to that volume. A considerable number of additional papers are now printed; but from the impossibility of obtaining the necessary woodcuts from the engraver, the issue of the first part of Vol. ix. is delayed. The attention of the Council has been directed to these embarrassing circumstances; and they have at present under consideration the best means of securing a greater promptitude in the execution of the illustrations, and, what will be the immediate consequence, a speedier publication of the "Proceedings."

Many interesting and important communications have been brought